



January 10, 2005

Mayor Ron Gonzales
Members of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan Task Force
San Jose City Hall
801 North 1st Street
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear Mayor Gonzales and Members of the Task Force:

Two weeks ago, the Coyote Valley Vision bulletin was sent out in the mail. On the back page is an article stating that the non-urban buffer becomes more defined. It reads:

"A greenbelt strategy for the non-urban buffer proposes a framework to create and sustain a rural environment that supports high value rural residential home sites, active open space and related recreation, conservation, and small-scale agriculture."

While high value homes may not altogether be inconsistent with non-urban buffers, the primary focus in the greenbelt should be on promoting agriculture and conservation. High value homes alone won't make it a greenbelt. What needs to be created is a variety of funding sources which will allow for as much land in the Coyote Valley greenbelt to be permanently protected as possible.

According to LAFCOs Urban Services Area policies, effective mitigation measures must be developed to address the loss of agricultural and open space lands. Mitigation measures include:

"the acquisition and dedication of farmland, development rights, open space and conservation easements to permanently protect adjacent and other agricultural lands within the county,..."

Even though this plan seems to become more costly with each passing day, this policy from LAFCO should not and cannot be ignored. When farmland is slated to be paved

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over, mitigation measures are no different than the costs associated with new roads and sewers. This would also be one step towards ensuring the greenbelt is protected.

Then again, if sky-rocketing infrastructure costs are posing too much of a problem in Coyote Valley, maybe the best thing to do is to look to North San Jose. Infrastructure is already in place. There would be no need to mitigate for the loss of prime farmland and it could also be a model for smart growth. This would provide everyone with a chance to take the slower approach with Coyote Valley; to make sure that the design elements that are included truly represent smart growth principles, when the time is right.

Sincerely,



Michele Beasley

South Bay Field Representative